

by announcing his plan to present Congress with a budget proposal that will balance the budget by 2012. I applaud the President for his announcement and look forward to working with him to bring fiscal responsibility back to the federal government.

Our nation faces many difficult decisions in the coming years, and Congress will face great pressure to spend beyond its means rather than to make difficult decisions about spending priorities. Unless Congress is forced to make the decisions necessary to create a balanced budget, it will always have the all-too-tempting option of shirking this responsibility. The Balanced Budget Constitutional amendment is a common sense approach to ensure that Congress is bound by the same fiscal principles that America's families face each day.

I urge support of this important legislation.

RECOGNIZING CHARLES T. ORTMAN FOR ACHIEVING THE RANK OF EAGLE SCOUT

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Charles T. Ortman, a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 395, and in earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Charles has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Charles has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Charles T. Ortman for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout. I am honored to represent Charles in the United States House of Representatives.

THE TEAM (TO ENCOURAGE ALTERNATIVELY-FUELED VEHICLE MANUFACTURING) UP FOR ENERGY INDEPENDENCE ACT

HON. ZOE LOFGREN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California. Madam Speaker, climate change threatens the security and stability of our planet. The temperature of the earth is increasing at a rate unseen in modern times and is starting to melt the polar ice caps and disrupt weather patterns. Unprecedented levels of carbon dioxide pumped into the atmosphere by automobiles and industries, with about one-fourth of the world's carbon dioxide emissions being produced by the United States, have led to current rates of warming.

Historically high gas prices and political instability in oil producing regions reinforce the need for the United States to secure our energy independence. We can make real progress by developing and distributing alternatively fueled vehicles. Through innovation and existing technology, we can reduce our dependence on foreign oil, and promote energy efficiency and conservation to secure a safe future for our country and the environment.

Alternatively fueled vehicles, such as those that use E85 ethanol fuel, could reduce our use of petroleum fuels by up to 40%, helping our country move towards sustainable energy independence. E85 ethanol fuel can be produced from agricultural products grown here in the United States, so that money spent on fuel supports farmers in the Midwest, not countries in the Middle East. Corn may not be the only answer to biofuels, as other sources of energy such as switchgrass or other renewable starch re-sources are also on the horizon.

Congress must do more to make alternative fueled vehicles practical and accessible to every American. There are currently only six million E85-capable vehicles on U.S. roads, compared to approximately 230 million gasoline- and diesel-fueled vehicles, according to the National Ethanol Vehicle Coalition. Only 993 fuel stations in the entire country currently provide E85 fuel, and only four of these are located in California.

That is why I am again introducing this bill to encourage consumers and manufacturers to develop the infrastructure necessary for a cleaner energy future. We must do more to make alternatively fueled vehicles practical and accessible to everyone. The cost of producing flex fuel capable vehicles is minimal at the time of manufacture, but there are currently few incentives for the production of flex fuel vehicles and a lack of infrastructure to service them.

My bill will encourage the production of more alternatively fueled vehicles by phasing in a tax penalty on the manufacture or import of new, non-flex fuel vehicles. However, since the cost to convert fleets to flex fuel is nearly nil, it will be easy for manufacturers or importers to avoid these costs completely. Any revenues generated would be used to help independent gas station owners install alternative fuel equipment.

I would like to thank Speaker PELOSI for her hard work and dedication to increase investment in renewable energy and ultimately achieving energy independence. I hope this bill can be a part of the crucial national dialogue towards securing our energy independence and helping America move towards a more secure and sustainable future.

COMMENDING JOAN COUNTRYMAN

HON. JAMES R. LANGEVIN

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. LANGEVIN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commend Joan Countryman, who recently became the head of the Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy for Girls in South Africa.

In 2005, Ms. Countryman stepped down as head of the prestigious Lincoln School for girls in Providence, Rhode Island.

Ms. Countryman, a Quaker, began her career first as a math teacher and then as an administrator at the Germantown Friends School in Philadelphia, which she attended as a student. She received a bachelor's degree from Sarah Lawrence College in 1962, and after taking part in the civil rights movement, she received a master's degree in urban studies from Yale. In 1966, Ms. Countryman received a Fulbright fellowship to the London School of Economics. She is also a former Columbia University Klingenstein Fellow and a Woodrow Wilson Fellow. Ms. Countryman is also the author of works such as her 1992 book, *Writing to Learn Mathematics*, in which she explained how she approached the teaching of math by using such tools as journals, learning logs, and formal papers.

Before asking Ms. Countryman to head her new academy, Oprah Winfrey first asked her to lend her experience and expertise as a consultant. Oprah Winfrey founded the Leadership Academy with the goal of targeting South African girls from poor families and giving them an educational opportunity that they would otherwise not have received. Beginning with 152 girls in the seventh and eighth grades, the academy has a goal of expanding through grade 12.

I know that Joan Countryman will institute a welcoming and challenging school environment at the Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy. Rhode Island was honored to have Ms. Countryman as an educator for twelve years, and the girls in South Africa will be lucky to have her there now.

Madam Speaker, I ask all my colleagues to join with me in wishing Joan Countryman well in her new endeavor, as well as success to the Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy.

RECOGNIZING JONATHAN VERNICKAS FOR ACHIEVING THE RANK OF EAGLE SCOUT

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Jonathan Vernickas, a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 214, and in earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Jonathan has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Jonathan has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Jonathan Vernickas for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout. I am honored to represent Jonathan in the United States House of Representatives.